

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7012
By Swafford

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mary Crabtree, co-founder of the Cumberland County Playhouse.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Mary Crabtree; and

WHEREAS, Mary Crabtree was an exemplary Tennessean and consummate professional who worked assiduously to enrich the lives of her fellow citizens by bringing the joys of artistic expression to the people of this State; and

WHEREAS, born in Crossville, Mary Crabtree had deep family roots in the community; her great-grandfather, Samuel Cline, was one of Crossville's founders, and her grandfather, S.C. Bishop established the *Crossville Chronicle* newspaper; in establishing the Cumberland County Playhouse, Mary Crabtree created a lasting legacy in Crossville that will be long remembered and appreciated by future generations; and

WHEREAS, as a young actress, Mary Crabtree moved to New York City in 1941 and met her future husband, Paul Crabtree, in the national company of George Abbott's *Kiss and Tell*; together they gained wide respect for their work on Broadway and in Hollywood; and

WHEREAS, during a professional hiatus in the summer of 1963, the Crabtrees, along with their seven children, stopped in Crossville for the summer to ponder future plans, and when they were asked to engage local children in an activity, the idea of a community theater was born; and

WHEREAS, after co-founding the Cumberland County Playhouse, which held its first performance in 1965, Mary Crabtree, a talented artist, actress, costume designer, and director, succeeded her husband as C.C.P's Producing Director in 1971; and

WHEREAS, also in 1971, the Playhouse became the only rural-based organization in Tennessee designated by the Tennessee Arts Commission as a Major Cultural Institution, a distinction it still holds today; and

WHEREAS, during her illustrious tenure as Producing Director, Mrs. Crabtree oversaw Cumberland County Playhouse's first balanced budget, first season tickets, and first professional company; and

WHEREAS, on behalf of the Cumberland County Playhouse, Mary Crabtree accepted the Tennessee Governor's Award in the Arts from Governor Alexander in 1989; and

WHEREAS, thanks to her peerless devotion to the arts, the theater she helped to found now attracts close to 200,000 visitors annually and has become one of the most successful theaters in rural America; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Crabtree was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mary Crabtree enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband Paul, who preceded her in death in 1979, and her seven surviving children, Jim Crabtree, who has been the producing director at the playhouse since 1981, Amanda May, Tom Crabtree, Abigail C. Woods, David Crabtree, Amelie Woods, and Bill Crabtree, whom she called her "best productions"; and

WHEREAS, Mary Crabtree is also survived by seventeen grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and generations of young people whom she taught and positively influenced during her career; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Crabtree leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mary Crabtree, reflecting fondly upon her

impeccable character, her devotion to the theater, her family, and her community, and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mary Crabtree.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.